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ABSTRACT

This Yearbook begins with a foreword by Janice F. Almasi that outlines some of the steps that the state of Maryland is taking as a leader in literacy education and literacy assessment, and the eight articles in this edition reflect many of these steps. The articles are: "Three Dialogues about Reading Engagement" (John T. Guthrie); "My Classroom Was Literacy Poor!" (Corinne Pritzlaff Weis): "Read to Somebody Everyday: A Shared Reading Program" (Steven P. Chasen and Gail W. Holt); "Blending Reader Response Theories and Reading Comprehension Instruction" (Sandra R. Wallis); "The 'Write' To Learn Mathematics" (Bob. M. Drake and Linda B. Amspaugh); "Intermediate Grade Students' Awareness of the Writing Process" (Natalie Felsher, Judy Ramoy Johnson, and Priscilla P. Waynant); "The Use of Retellings for Portfolio Assessment of Reading Comprehension" (Patricia S. Koskinen, Linda B. Gambrell, and Barbara A. Kapinus); and "The Signing for Reading Success Study Group" (Cynthia T. Bowen, Jean H. Mattheiss, and Robert M. Wilson). (NKA)

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1993 Volume 10

State of Maryland International Reading Association Council

Literacy

Issues and Practices

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NEW FEATURE

Readers are invited to submit brief descriptions of innovative literacy ideas that "work" in their classrooms for possible use in a new feature of the 1994 volume, "Ideas that Work."

SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

Send manuscripts to:

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LITERACY:
ISSUES AND PRACTICES

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Volume X

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Photographs: The photographs of children that are interspersed throughout this year's journal depict children engaged in literate activities at the University of Maryland Summer Reading Program. Readers are invited to submit black and white glossy photographs of children in Maryland's schools, classrooms, homes, and communities for possible use in volume 11 of *Literacy: Issues and Practices*. Photographs must be accompanied by written consent from the legal guardian of the children depicted.

Literacy: Issues and Practices

Vol. X, 1993

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Foreword

The general public is often quick to attach a label of inferiority on education. The inferior status of America's educational system for preparing students for the workplace of the future is, unfortunately, reliably documented (Mikulecky & Drew, 1991). President Clinton, in a message of hope, during his inaugural address stated, "... There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America." At a time when we, as educators, must look to reeducate America for the future; a future that promises heightened literacy demands, a future that promises vast technological advances, and a future that must include *all* Americans, we must likewise look to what is **right** with literacy education to cure both illiteracy and aliteracy.

Maryland's educational initiatives have provided the rest of the nation with a model for success. Over the past year, the University of Maryland and the University of Georgia were awarded a five-year, federally-funded grant, *The National Reading Research Center* (NRRC). The center, previously known as *The Center for the Study of Reading*, had its home at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for the past 15 years. The research being conducted in the NRRC represents a fresh, exciting perspective on literacy and research. All of the research being conducted by the NRRC is classroom-based. Many of the research projects include teacher-researchers as primary investigators and permanent research sites have been set up throughout Maryland and Georgia. John Guthrie, co-director of the center along with Donna Alvermann of the University of Georgia, shares his perspectives on literacy and the state of reading research in his article, *Three Dialogues About Reading Engagement*.

Maryland has also paved the way for the nation in literacy assessment as well. The Maryland State Department's, *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program* (MSPAP), although not without administrative flaws, is a blueprint for the nation in terms of authentic, outcome-based assessment. In a recent investigation conducted by the National Reading Research Center (NRRC) of the effects of the MSPAP on instruction in Maryland, 62% of the Supervisors of Reading in Maryland's 24 public school systems reported that their systems are either putting into place, or have already altered their literacy curriculum to include literature-based instruction that is integrated across the curriculum—two major components of the MSPAP. Five of the articles in this volume reflect these curricular trends, in that they detail practical and innovative ideas, as well as research and theory, on creating a literate environment through the use of literature and writing.

Corinne Pritzlaff Weis' article, *My Classroom was Literacy Poor!* vividly describes how a classroom that looks deceptively innovative can be impoverished in terms of creating and nurturing literate behaviors among students. Her practical suggestions offer tangible and realistic solutions to the problem. Steven P. Chasen and Gail W. Holt likewise offer their expertise in developing a parental involvement program to develop interest in reading with their article, *Read to Somebody Everyday: A Shared Reading Program*. Sandra R. Wallis' literature review, *Blending Reader Response Theories and Reading Comprehension Instruction* offers a syn-

thesis of theory regarding reader response approaches to literature instruction. She urges teachers to consider practical applications in the classroom that embrace reader response theory in that such applications might enhance students' literary appreciation.

In addressing the trend for integration across the curriculum, Bob Drake and Linda Amspaugh's article, *The Write to Learn Mathematics*, details how writing can be integrated into mathematics and become an integral factor in assisting children in their conceptualization. The reading/writing connection is evident in the work of Natalie Felsher, Judy Ramoy Johnstone, and Priscilla P. Waynant as well, as they offer preliminary evidence regarding the benefits of metacognitive interviews for helping students internalize the writing process in their research article, *Intermediate Grade Students' Metacognitive Awareness of the Writing Process*.

Although it is critical to create a literate environment and integrate literacy throughout the curriculum, in a nation that demands accountability, assessment must also occur. Portfolio assessment represents one of the newest trends in authentic classroom assessment. This trend is addressed in Patricia Koskinen, Linda Gambrell, and Barbara Kapinus' article, *The Use of Retellings for Portfolio Assessment of Reading Comprehension*. This article provides insightful comparison between two techniques that teachers, as well as researchers, might consider when scoring retellings for use in portfolios.

The article by Cynthia T. Bowen, Jean H. Mattheiss, and Robert M. Wilson, *The Signing for Reading Success Study Group*, represents a departure from assessment and the creation of a literate environment. At a time when site-based management has afforded teachers greater control for establishing the directions that their schools take, this article describes a unique teacher study group in the Baltimore County Public Schools. Designed as a staff development initiative to assist teachers as they learned how to use signing as an alternative for vocabulary instruction, the accomplishments of this study group provide a model for other schools in terms of establishing a dynamic working team within schools that is capable of identifying a need, creating a plan for addressing the need, and communicating the results to others.

Plato once stated that, "What is honored in a country will be cultivated there." In schools and classrooms in which teachers honor literacy it will be cultivated and honored as an integral part not only of school, but of life. It is my hope that the articles in the present volume of *Literacy: Issues and Practice* will highlight some of the dramatic steps that Maryland is taking as a forerunner in literacy education and provide insight into how literacy may be cultivated within our schools even further.

Janice F. Almasi
Editor

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Mikulecky, L., & Drew, R. (1991). Basic literacy skills in the workplace. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (vol. 2) (pp. 669–689). New York, NY: Longman.

LITERACY: ISSUES AND PRACTICES, Volume 10, 1993

Three Dialogues About Reading Engagement

John T. Guthrie

You may have heard that the U.S. Department of Education awarded the National Reading Research Center (NRRC) to the Universities of Georgia and Maryland. Teachers and Administrators across Maryland, Georgia and affiliated institutions are now the actors in a new drama about reading.

The aims of the NRRC are to set the stage for three dialogues about reading. The theme of these interchanges is: **How can educators develop reading engagement in all students?**

We are entering a new era in our understanding of what it means to be literate. Being a good reader extends beyond the reading comprehension of the 1980s to the reading-in-action of the 1990s. An active, engaged reader:

- chooses to read for aesthetic experience,
- searches for books that satisfy an interest,
- integrates ideas across texts,
- becomes a critic of books, authors, and documents, and
- carries a literate style into every niche of life.

Highly engaged readers use their backgrounds and reading strategies to understand their worlds, to experience the imaginary space of an author, and to guide their problem solving. These are not "higher order" traits; or, if they are, we must help all students to grow into "higher-order" readers. These traits are now basic to leading the literate life in school and in the community. As our knowledge and literatures expand, and as our communities grow more complicated, our literacies must take a radical leap forward.

The NRRC is supporting dialogues about **how to foster the growth of the engaged reader.** The notion of nourishing engaged readers is not widely contested. As members of the NRRC, school-based and university-based researchers alike embrace the broad view that reading engagement is a desirable outcome of teaching. The question of **how** is the theme of the drama, and the dialogues within it.

School-University Dialogue

As the scene opens on the NRRC in Maryland, we witness the beginning of a vibrant School-University dialogue on this issue. A variety of teachers, principals and administrators have invited the faculty of the university to join them in reflecting on their teaching and assessment programs. These reflections have become collaborations of School-University personnel within the NRRC research program.

Essential to the dialogue are mutual commitments of the participants to the practices of schooling and the explanations of research. The primary aims of teachers are to create action plans that move students forward—to teach well. Many teachers are inventing new approaches to help children become engaged readers. As these inventions become practices, teachers ask which of these inventions work, and which ones work for which children. As teachers ask questions to explain their practices, they join the community of researchers.

A basic goal of the NRRC is **to develop explanations of schooling for reading**—to research well. Research aims to explain **how** children learn, **why** an instructional program fosters engaged reading, and **what accounts for** the effectiveness of a school. When research is conducted in classrooms and school programs, the explanations can be useful to all participants.

Our joint venture is both to create and to understand good schooling for literacy. A challenge of teaching is to invent new approaches to reading, and a challenge of research is to explain those inventions so they can be shared. Without an explanation, an inspiring approach to instruction is cloistered in the classroom where it originally took root. With a workable explanation in mind, a teacher can communicate an approach to other educators. The teacher can export the invention to other sites.

The NRRC aims to develop a practical explanation of how to foster engaged reading. Our goal is to be able to explain our practices to other people, and practice our explanations in new classrooms.

Reading Specialist—School Community Dialogue

As the scene zooms in on a typical, local public school, nearly everybody agrees that literacy is learned at home, in reading class, in social studies and in free time. Helping students become fully engaged readers is everybody's business—parents, classroom teachers, reading coordinators, principals, and special education teachers. Reading specialists become a liaison between the local community and the research community. Well-versed in current research, yet grounded in the schools, the expertise of the reading specialist is critical for informing other teachers and administrators about the instructional implications of studies and informing university researchers about the realities of the classroom.

Participants now assume that students need to acquire reading as a many-splendored tool for knowledge acquisition, literary involvement, and self-enhancement. Based on a survey completed by the NRRC in Maryland, Reading Specialist-School Community discussions are resulting in remarkable integrations of reading with science, history, geography, and math as well as literature. Integrated curricula are sprouting in school after school and district after district.

Many of these interchanges are addressing the challenge of creating programs that integrate reading instruction into a variety of learning activities. Currently existing initiatives include:

- using trade books for reading instruction in social studies
- encouraging student-led discussions of literature
- integrating reading into "hands-on" science
- incorporating interest and motivation in assessments of reading

- teaching cognitive strategies within content domains
- bridging school and home with books
- embracing all genre and symbol systems in reading instruction

To explain these innovations with their benefits and pitfalls, research is needed. A story of a creative departure can be narrated; a portrait of a program can be painted. But awe-inspiring as the story and portrait may be, they do not explain. Disciplined inquiry is needed for explanation and such an enterprise calls for full community participation.

The Specialist-Community dialogue can be heard in the University of Maryland, as well. Literary scholars, scientists, statisticians, and psychologists are talking to the reading researchers. Such a sound has rarely been heard, you can be sure, but the sound rings true. Unprecedented alliances are forming to design and deliver an integrated curriculum that is capable of nurturing reading engagement at all ages.

Inner Dialogue

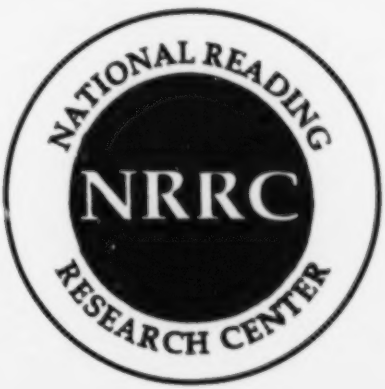
As the curtain closes on the drama, the cacophony of the outside world resounds in the head of one teacher-researcher. As this individual drives to work, walks the dog, vacuums the carpet, or meanders the neighborhood, the spotlight turns inward. Audible above the din is a persistent inner dialogue that speaks from three perspectives. The voice of challenge speaks to the potential for enacting change. The voice of opposition acknowledges our limitations, and the voice of promise provides a sense of hope.

Voice of challenge: "Am I ready for my students tomorrow?" "Do I have it together to take them to a new level this year?" "Am I doing enough for the kids who need me the most?"

Voice of opposition: "There is not enough time to do all that you ask." "How can I serve so many masters?" "I am actually human you know!"

Voice of promise: "I suspect someone else will join me." "I suspect I can find an explanation by continuing to reflect."

The voices of promise ring loudest. Reaching for the integration of reading into all aspects of schooling and life is our natural gesture; and the dialogues extend our reach. As members of the Maryland reading community you are part of the NRRC dialogue—and I look forward to speaking with more and more of you as we expand our conversation.



LITERACY: ISSUES AND PRACTICES, Volume 10, 1993

My Classroom was Literacy Poor!

Corinne Pritzlaff Weis

We have all taken journeys during our lives. They may been physical, psychological, professional, pleasurable, or a combination of any of them. One of my recent journeys has been as an early childhood teacher.

As we have traveled, we have often taken side trips and have had experiences that have broadened our knowledge base and enriched our lives as well as the lives of the people we have touched.

We are constantly learning. What we do with our newly acquired knowledge is personal. I have had an enriching experience learning about emergent literacy. I am passing my "travels" on to my students and on to you.

I had been a teacher of four– and five–year–old children for two years. I shared my classroom with another teacher. We had a large, open environment that was broken down into center-type areas. These areas were divided by movable shelving units and tables. There was a block area, a housekeeping area, an art area, a manipulative area, two book display shelves, a snack table, a science/puzzle table, and a writing/puzzle table. We offered an abundant supply of paper, writing tools, and art supplies in the art area. The writing table had some stencils, stamps, pencils, paper, and the alphabet to trace. The housekeeping area contained a new kitchen unit, dress up clothes, hats, bags, dolls and accessories. The classroom walls were colorful with seasonal figures or themes, circle area charts, calendars, and workjobs. In the art area was a bulletin board for displaying artwork. The physical environment was well designed, featuring a natural flow pattern and accessibility for the children.

I taught a traditional, developmental-based early childhood program. I started the morning off with a circle time. This included practicing numbers on a calendar, talking about weather and seasons using charts, reciting poems and fingerplays. The children moved into a self-selection activity and snack time, followed by recess, a story time, a lesson and project, and a closing circle. Fridays were reserved for sharing, physical education, a cooking or a science experience, and a concept-related art project.

Is There Something Missing?

I had observed that my students did not spend very much time at the writing, art, science, or reading areas. Many children were "roamers" or played in the housekeeping and manipulative areas. If they sat at the writing table, they quickly stamped out a random picture or traced some stencils and moved on. Nothing seemed to hold their interest. I had a few students who would dictate a line or two about their pictures upon my request, but no one sat down at the art table to illustrate

and write a story. I saw little or no positive change in their writing which basically consisted of writing their names. One or two children picked up a book and leafed through the pages during self-selection times, but no one had ever "read" to a friend or to an imaginary audience. I remember mentioning to friends and colleagues that I did not have a very "creative" class. I justified their lack of "literacy involvement" to their need for play and socialization, because they only came to school three days a week. They did not have time to "get into" creative reading and writing activities. What I did not realize, until I experienced an emergent literacy class, was that we had what I called a literacy-poor environment. The walls, shelves and tables were lacking real, purposeful, and meaningful print. Print and examples of literacy were basically nonexistent in this environment!

At the start of the school year, we had labeled some items in classroom: the clock, a shelf, a table, a door, etc. We were asked not to display the alphabet, but to concentrate on colors, shapes, and other concepts. To the average person the room appeared happy, colorful, organized, and clean. To my eye it had become sterile, stagnant, and boring.

A Literacy-Rich Classroom for Preschoolers?

Why change the room? Why make it a "print-rich" environment (Fields, Hillstead, 1990; Neuman & Roskos, 1990; Reutzel, Oda & Moore, 1989; Stewart, 1985)? (After all the children are only four and five!) Will the children notice a difference? Will their literacy behaviors change? Will a center, full of literacy-related materials, hold their attention longer? I asked myself many questions; the most important were, how and where do I begin? Some of these questions were research problems, some were based on observation, and others took brainstorming, footwork, and prepwork on my part.

Why have a literacy-enriched and print-rich environment (Neuman & Roskos, 1990)? Should reading be "taught" in an early childhood classroom (Throne, 1988)? Are they ready for it? Isn't that "pushing" them? These are questions asked by parents and teachers. First of all, young children do not learn by being "taught" anything. They are exposed, they experience, experiment, imitate, and practice; they discover and develop concepts for themselves. Very young children are exposed to "print" and "reading" while driving in a car and watching television. In preschool and day care centers literacy is experienced in drawing, scribbling, pretend writing, music, play, and talking (Throne, 1988). Should an early childhood classroom be void of "real" print because the children cannot "read?"

As a parent and as a teacher of young children, I realized that literacy develops from a very early age. Young children are exposed to environmental print and book print as they learn about the world around them. They may not be able to "read" environmental print per se, but they certainly read symbolic cues and are aware of print. Teale and Martinez (1988) have noted that children in a literate society begin learning to read and write early in life. They observe their parents reading for particular reasons (newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, books, paperwork for office or household responsibilities, etc.). They see billboards, store and restaurant signs, as well as street and traffic signs (Roskos, 1988; Throne, 1988; Walton, 1989; Weiss & Hagen, 1988). They experience literacy in real life situations and come to realize that reading and writing have purpose.

We know that children learn to talk by actively experimenting with oral language, imitating, practicing, and receiving feedback from others. It makes sense that children learn to read by reading and to write by writing (Hiebert, 1991; Teale & Martinez, 1988; Walton, 1989). The literacy activities they experience should be meaningful to them, fun, predictable, and natural. They need to discover for themselves that print, spoken language, and meaning are connected. Through modeling, experience, and practice, they soon realize that we read for purpose and for pleasure (Walton, 1989).

Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985), suggests that early literacy development occurs when the functions of print are made plain and clear to young children. Reading and writing *will* become meaningful to young children when they understand *why* people read and write (Weiss & Hagen, 1988).

Why should they not see this environmental print when they start preschool or kindergarten? Does it make sense to "stop the flow" of literacy development started in the home?

It is up to the classroom teacher to continue to broaden young children's exposure, experience, and practice with the various functions of print at their different levels of development: some of our children may have very little home literacy exposure; some may come to us with a great wealth of knowledge. We need to act as guides and facilitators (Atkins, 1984). We need to provide the tools and reasons to encourage reading and writing. We need to furnish the opportunities in which young children can explore different printed materials and experience meaningful literacy activities. Literacy awareness develops through formal and informal experiences (Weiss & Hagen, 1988).

We, as teachers, foster the importance of reading by reading aloud to children and by encouraging children to "read" to themselves and to an audience. Young children need to be exposed to books and to practice interacting with books to increase their reading comprehension and oral language abilities (Teale & Martinez, 1988). A large selection of reading material needs to be offered in various areas of the classroom.

Holdaway's "shared book experiences" and the usage of Big Books (Throne, 1988) enable children to experience print as the book is being read to the group (Hiebert, 1991). They discover that the print has meaning (Walton, 1989). Children can be actively involved in the reading of Big Books; they learn to follow along with the reading. They develop directionality and the spoken word/printed word connection.

Incorporating "little books" in the curriculum also helps young children interact while reading (McGee & Richgels, 1990). They are involved and active; they are "reading." The children have their own books, see the print, and feel the success of being readers.

Children see us reading and writing daily when we read our mail, make grocery or chore lists, look at magazines, take messages from the answering machine, etc. These are purposeful and pleasurable activities, and we should encourage children to practice these real and meaningful activities in school. With literacy-focused centers (Hayes, 1990), such as a mail center, children actively experience reading and writing with a goal or reason. Thus, children are motivated to learn these

processes (Walton, 1989). Walton and others suggest offering a choice of writing tools and materials in order to encourage writing and reading: charts and written directions, calendars, stencils and alphabet manipulatives, recipes and labels, word banks and word collections, forms and envelopes. All of these demonstrate the usefulness of print and immerse children in reading meaningful print. A literacy-enriched classroom stimulates learning and offers opportunities for children to experiment, create, discover, and think in a safe and supportive environment (Walton, 1989). Children learn that print identifies, directs, and explains. They learn to match spoken words with written words (Stewart, 1985). These encounters with print build sight-word vocabulary, and help children understand how reading works (Fields & Hillstead, 1990). Children will be interacting with these mediums of print at their own levels. They will feel successful in their attempts. Offering opportunities that encourage children to scribble, copy, and write facilitates their learning to read (Stewart, 1985).

In a print-rich environment children are learning about reading and writing, and learning reading behaviors in meaningful ways, not learning "reading readiness" skills from dittos or workbooks. Readiness skill drills are unfamiliar, unreal, and serve no purpose to young children. These drills do not take into account that children learn at their own developmental levels and stages (Throne, 1988). Children bring no prior experience or personal knowledge to a ditto or drill to make it meaningful to them; but they are familiar with real, purposeful activities that they confront in their daily lives. To imitate these experiences is to bring meaning into the educational process.

Practical Activities Develop Literacy

The areas chosen for literacy enrichment should depict real life literacy experiences. Props should be as close to the real thing as possible. They should be things that children find naturally in their environment. Familiar and purposeful props encourage literacy development because children have prior knowledge and experience with these things. Use of "everyday" props in centers helps develop thematic play and role playing. As play becomes connected, knowledge and experiences are shared by the children as they interact, and reading and writing become tools for a purpose during play (Neuman & Roskos, 1990).

To have meaning children's activities need to be appropriate. These activities can be designed to enrich and to complement their play (Throne, 1988). This meaningful play will hold their interest, not frustrate and bore them with inappropriate tasks. Offering unlimited practice and experimentation facilitates learning by demonstrating how the language system works. Learning by doing is natural for young children (Fields & Hillstead, 1990; Teale & Martinez, 1988).

Changing My Classroom Environment: What and How?

Now that I know why I should have a literacy-enriched classroom, my journey becomes a quest to learn what and how to change the classroom and where to get the materials on a very limited budget like my own.

The first task I set for myself was to make a MESSAGE CENTER for my classroom. It was to be more than a Post Office, yet it would serve as a mailing

center, too. I wanted my students to want to write, design, and draw. I wanted them to experience and practice writing and reading what they and their peers had written. I planned my center supplies around children making lists, writing letters and notes, and making and sending cards. I needed paper in various sizes and types, pads, card stock, and a lot of envelopes and stamps. I needed some examples of "print" and a mail box.

I started my search for free or inexpensive paper, pads, and envelopes. I asked several copy center stores, a paper factory, and an envelope factory for any discards. I went to garage sales and asked family, friends, and colleagues for paper products no longer useful to them. I found bargain boxes of envelopes at a local department store. To keep the materials organized, I purchased small plastic baskets ranging from fifty cents to two dollars. They came in matching colors to give an "authentic" look to the center. The table became cluttered with the new supply of materials I had collected. I found multi-compartment shoe boxes at a discount store to display and store the materials. For samples of literacy, I collected letters, cards, and assorted junk mail. I cut the covers off old greeting cards for the children to make their own cards, adding their own messages. One thing I learned is that a literacy-rich center does not appear over night! But where there is a will, there is a way. With perseverance, I found what I needed to introduce the center, and I would have extra materials to add variety later.

Next I needed a plan for the "set up." I made a MESSAGE CENTER mobile out of poster board and had it laminated (See Figure 1). This provided examples of print

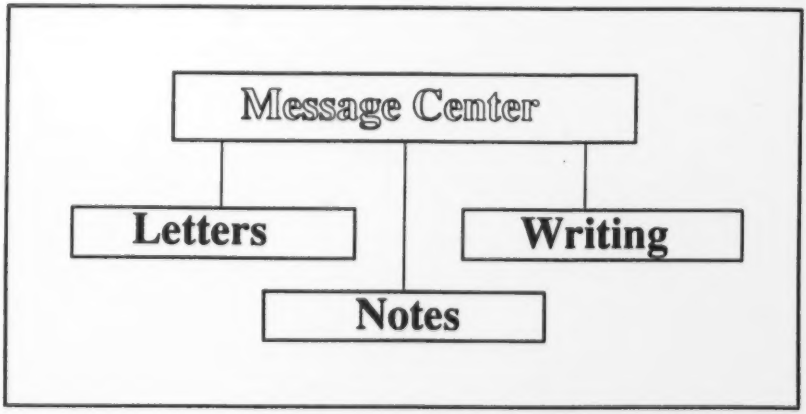


Figure 1 Sample of mobile.

and gave the children key sight words and ideas of what to do at this center. I used the words Message Center, letters, notes, lists, cards, and writing. This mobile hung at eye level above the center table (Neuman & Roskos, 1990). I made a word box from a file box. Here I put each child's name and child-requested words on blank 3 × 5 cards. The children were encouraged to add words to the box for future reference and as another way to experience print. I made a small display of sample

(addressed) envelopes, a party invitation, and a simple note for the children to refer to. I made a mail box out of poster board and a box. The helpers of the day distributed the mail. The children who recognized their peers' names helped the children who could not.

The day I introduced the center was a busy one! During circle time, I asked what a message was. We talked about oral and written messages. We discussed different ways we communicated to others by writing. I asked questions about birthday cards and party invitations they might have received through the mail and different kinds of mail that mommies and daddies get. The children were familiar with greeting cards and mail; they excitedly shared their knowledge and experiences with each other. We visited the new center as a group. I pointed out the words on the mobile and the different supplies. The mail box was not put out. I did no modeling for them that day.

During child-initiated time, the center was full with the "experimenters" (McGee & Richgels, 1990) and the curious. Two children spent all of their free time at the center. They wrote letters, made greeting cards, and stuffed envelopes. I showed them how the word box worked, and we added key words that they asked for: to, from, dear, mommy and daddy. Other children experienced the center for shorter periods of time; they were all there with a purpose in mind. They wrote a letter or invitation to a friend or made a card for their mom. The greatest thrill for them was using the envelopes!

The next day I "modeled" the use of the center (Hayes, 1990). I wrote a letter, added a word to the word box, and addressed an envelope. I helped several children write cards and letters and add their chosen words to the word box. Then I introduced the mail box, and we discussed how we would use it in the classroom. This led to another discussion on how we would address the envelopes. (There was confusion about whose name goes on the envelope.) The most exciting part for me was when one little boy, who had no interest in story writing, drawing, or oral discussions, came over and asked me to help him write a letter to his friend! We wrote the letter; he put it into an envelope, added stickers, and was thrilled with his product. The next day we met, the same child asked me how to write "Mommy;" he wanted to write a note to his mother. I wrote "Mommy" on a card for him. He "copied" my word and wrote his note (See Figure 2). I was astonished and excited, this was a child who had not previously even attempted to write his own name! The program was working!

My next step was to model writing a letter to a friend as a small group activity. I realized that I was not doing enough modeling for these children. This was a step by step process of writing a letter, addressing the envelope, and mailing the finished product. Some of my students needed encouragement to write at their own levels, but I was happy with the success of this activity.

I was pleased with the activity the message center had brought to the writing table. It had given the center purpose. The children delved into literacy activities that were meaningful and familiar to them while stretching their literacy skills. The writers were helping the beginners. They worked together sharing ideas and knowledge.

The next center I chose to change was the science table. We had previously

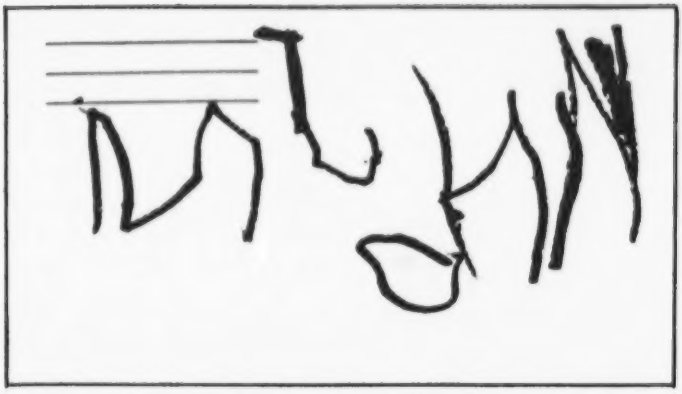


Figure 2 Sample of envelope with "MOMMY" written on it.

experienced birds of prey, penguins, migration, and feeding birds in winter. I decided our first science interest table would be on birds (Miller, 1989). My goals were to make an appealing display and to have materials that would "invite children's participation" (Miller, 1989). I collected stuffed birds, bird puppets, nests, houses, posters, postcards, a bird matching game, and books about birds. I purchased a replica of a hummingbird and an actual nest at a flower shop. I found realistic looking birds, nests, and eggs at craft stores; they cost between one and three dollars. I also displayed a collection of bird feathers mounted on a piece of styrofoam (Miller, 1989), real nests found abandoned in trees, and remnants of real eggs. The children were encouraged to bring in any bird-related items they found to add to the collection. The feathers were examined, discussed, compared, and sorted. A supply of paper and writing/drawing tools were put on the table, along with a word box. My interest and enthusiasm helped motivate and encourage the children to experience the center.

I wanted children to learn about the many species of birds, to identify many different kinds of birds, and to know the basic characteristics of birds. To introduce the center we brainstormed about the birds we knew and wrote down the birds' names on a chart as each child had an opportunity to share his/her knowledge. I was impressed with the number of birds we charted! Then we visited the center and posted our chart. We looked at the postcards that could be used as a matching activity, as an art activity, or as an example of print. I shared the books on birds that were shelved on the table. We looked at the hummingbird nest and the wooden bird house on display. Then they were off to child-initiated activities.

I was surprised by the reaction to the center. Several boys played with the stuffed birds! They were flying the birds, cheeping, and laughing during the experience. Another child drew a colorful picture of a parrot and copied the label off a card from the word box (see Figure 3). We added his parrot picture to the display.

During story time, we read a book about birds. We discussed common features of birds and differences in species. The book was simple to understand and had colorful pictures of exotic birds that most of the children were familiar with from

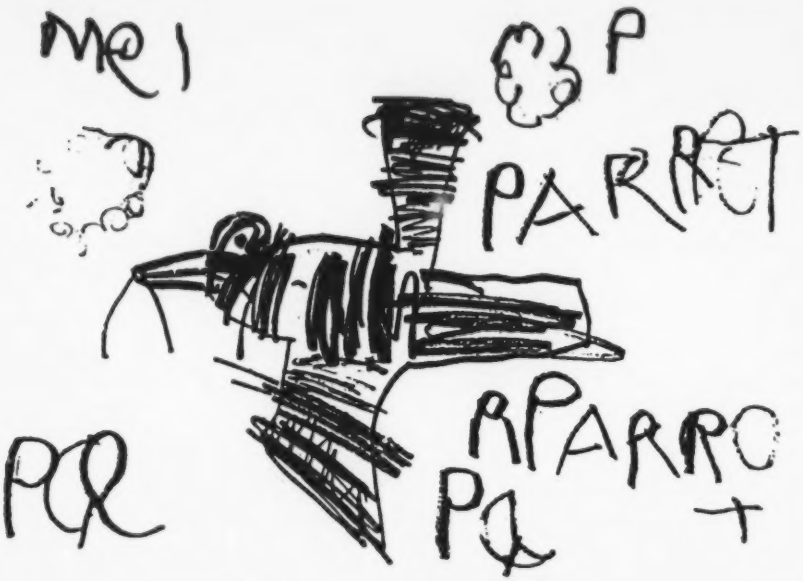


Figure 3 Parrot picture with labeling.

their trips to the zoo. They shared their knowledge of different birds with each other and enjoyed the reading.

The next step was preparing charts on birds with the children. I had noticed that the children enjoyed watching me write on charts; they were like little sponges absorbing what and how I wrote. We sounded out the beginning of the words, and I asked for help with the first letter. They were thrilled with seeing their ideas and knowledge become print.

I made other simple changes to make my classroom literacy rich. I added a "Grocery Store" shelf unit. Above the shelf I hung a store sign. I labeled the shelves with the names of the items that I had collected that are familiar to children. When in the store, I modeled reading the box labels and matching the word on the box with the label on the shelf. The children were encouraged to put the boxes and cans back by their labels and to shop with a list. We discussed what their parents take shopping: lists, coupons, checkbook, etc. I brought in the coupon section from the Sunday paper and encouraged the children to cut out coupons before shopping. We also had a coupon file in the home center to encourage "reading," cutting, classifying, and sorting.

As mentioned earlier, I was using more charts and posters during group discussion and circle times. I started to make a song chart, but the children decided to make it a "nursery rhyme" chart (Hayes, 1990). The children suggested their favorite nursery rhymes, and I wrote the title on the chart. Then we discussed a symbol that we could add to the chart that would represent that rhyme to them. They all participated in the activity; it was meaningful to them because they were their

ideas, not mine! At the beginning of the year I made an attendance chart. I used clothes pins with each child's name on them; the children found their pins and put them on the chart when they came to class. One by one the children learned to recognize their names. Then I made a "sign in" chart for attendance (Hayes, 1990; McGee & Richgels, 1990). The children wrote their names, or their symbol for their names, as they came to class. This chart gave them practice writing and reading their names and the names of their friends.

As my classroom became literacy enriched and my program became more whole-language oriented, I referred to my children as "readers and writers." This excited, encouraged, and motivated them to expand and stretch their knowledge and skills. I used Big Books as much as possible and did repeated readings of books. I found the children enjoyed being familiar with the texts and felt secure in "reading" along with me during these repeated readings. I noticed the children "sharing" books in the reading areas, and they started to "read" familiar books to each other. I made my own little books with the children. These were simple word books that they colored and illustrated. The children displayed their books and "read" them to the class. They were pleased with their accomplishments and proud of themselves.

The Proof is in the Classroom!

I was amazed at how quickly these children adapted to and participated in these literacy changes. These were natural activities for children. These children were ready, willing, and able to experience literacy and to experiment, discover, and practice in a print-rich environment. I was convinced that a classroom rich in meaningful print and purposeful literacy experiences encouraged and motivated my children to experiment, practice, and stretch as they became successful "readers and writers."

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LITERACY: ISSUES AND PRACTICES, Volume 10, 1993

Read to Somebody Everyday: A Shared Reading Program

Steven P. Chasen and Gail N. Holt

Introduction

When a young child and parent read stories together (shared reading), they are engaged in an interactive activity that can be both enjoyable and beneficial for the child and parent. Recently, Green Holly School in St. Mary's County, Maryland, devised a shared reading program entitled, "Read to Somebody Everyday" (RSE). Shared reading during RSE was defined as either the child and/or parent reading a story aloud to one other. The purpose of this paper is to describe how we created and managed the RSE program for an elementary school.

Rationale

The parents at our school requested home academic programs that involved parents interacting with their children. They further identified reading and mathematics as being academic areas of concern. This data was collected by means of a parental involvement survey administered by the Chapter One Coordinator. The RSE program was designed to fulfill parent requests. Additionally, first grade teachers asked for a program that encouraged beginning readers to practice reading at home.

Recently shared reading research has suggested that young children's reading comprehension may be enhanced (Elley, 1989; Yaden, Smolkin & Conlon, 1989), and parents who read to their children may be introducing their child to good reading habits (Robson & Whitley, 1989). In *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) stated, "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 23). Finally, Epstein and Dauber (1991) have suggested five types of school comprehensive involvement programs. One program is "involvement in learning activities at home" (p. 291). The RSE program is a home learning activity that involves first grade children and parents.

Read to Somebody Everyday

When our school was challenged to devise a shared reading program, a plan of action was needed to create and manage the program. The Chapter One Coordinator and Media Specialist volunteered to head the project. The RSE program was divided

into three phases that involved: (a) buying storybooks and accessories, (b) administering the RSE program, and (c) evaluating the program.

Buying Storybooks and Accessories

Before the program was launched, storybooks and accessories were needed. We were able to secure funds for the purchase of these materials with two grants provided by the St. Mary's Learning Disability Association and the Southern Maryland Reading Council. Paperback books were purchased from Scholastic Book Service and dense plastic bookcovers were purchased from Kapco Company. Since the books were going to be carried from school to home and back to school, we purchased plastic bookbags to further protect the books. Bookmarks were purchased with the remainder of the grant money. The bookbags and bookmarks were purchased from Upstart. Phase two of RSE program was ready to be implemented.

Administering the Shared Reading Program

For this phase, we decided to subdivide the program into three divisions: (a) parental letter and RSE contract, (b) four week shared reading, and (c) celebration of the program.

Parental letter and RSE contract. At the beginning of January, first grade students took home a letter to their parents along with the RSE contract. The letter stated the following information:

1. Why RSE was being incorporated in the school curriculum.
2. The parent and child will have to sign a contract agreeing to participate in RSE. The contract states that the parent and child will: (a) read three books together a week, (b) try to read everyday, (c) care for the reading materials, and (d) return the reading materials and reading activity card every Tuesday.
3. The RSE program will last for four weeks.
4. On Wednesday of each week, the child will bring home a bookbag kit containing three books and a reading activity card.
5. On Tuesday of the following week, the child will return the bookbag kit and reading activity card.
6. During the week, the parent and child will read the three books together and set a goal of reading everyday. Home library books, public library books and school library books may be substituted for kit books.
7. Reading together is defined as (a) child reading to parent, (b) parent reading to child, (c) child and parent reading together, and/or (d) child and parent taking turns reading together.
8. At the end of the four weeks, there will be a celebration recognizing those children and parents who have reached their goal according to the RSE contract.
9. An RSE evaluation survey will be administered to the first grade students at school, and the parent's survey will be sent home to be completed and returned to school.
10. The program will begin at the beginning of the next week, and the RSE contract must be signed by the parent and child and brought back to school before they may participate in the RSE program.

Once the contracts were returned, we were ready to distribute the bookbag kits.

Four weeks of shared reading. Before the first grade students and their parents received their first bookbag, a team of parent volunteers packed each bookbag with three books and a reading activity card. Each bookbag was assigned an identification number. Each reading activity card stated one of the following reading strategies: (a) looking at the pictures and predicting what might happen before reading the story, (b) sequencing the story, (c) thinking of a new end for the story, (d) deciding if the story could really happen, (e) rereading a favorite part of the story, and (f) retelling the story to a family member. Finally, the parent and child signed the activity card indicating that they did read three books.

The first grade teachers agreed to manage the distribution of the bookbag kits. They were provided with a list of their students who signed the RSE contract. On Wednesday, the students were given a bookbag, and the teacher wrote the identification number next to the student's name. On Tuesday of the following week, the students returned their bookbags, and the teacher marked off the identification number next to the student's name indicating that the bookbag was returned with the three books and reading activity card.

At the end of each week and at the end of the four weeks, the RSE coordinators collected the bookbags. The books were inventoried, inspected for damage, and placed back in the bookbags. At the end of the four weeks, letters were sent home inviting the parents to a celebration party.

Celebration party. At the party, we invited the school principal to be our guest reader. She read a favorite storybook of her children. After the reading, the children and parents enjoyed refreshments of punch and cookies. To conclude the celebration, the children received certificates of participation and "Read To Somebody Everyday" bookmarks.

Evaluating the RSE Program

We felt that it was necessary to measure the attitude of the first grade students and parents towards the RSE program. A three question survey was sent home to 82 sets of parents, and the Media Specialist administered the three question survey to the 82 first grade students. Table 1 presents the questions and results of the survey. The survey was completed by 77 first grade students and 62 sets of parents.

The survey results indicated that the first grade students and their parents positively agreed that shared reading is a "very important" activity. Additionally, they strongly agreed that shared reading was an enjoyable activity. Trelease (1989) has stated, "it (reading aloud/shared reading) allows the child to sample the delights and conditions him to believe that reading is a pleasureful experience, not a painful or boring one" (p. 9). We believe our program illustrated these benefits. Plus, the first grade students indicated that they believed the RSE program helped them to become better readers of storybooks.

Finally, the parents indicated that the RSE program reinforced their view toward reading stories with their child. The data signified that the majority of the parents have been reading stories with their young child. Parents indicated, "I already felt it so important," "I already had positive attitude and enjoyed reading with her before the program" and "It did not change my attitude, because I already knew how important it is to read to my child. However, it did reinforce the concept."

Table 1 *A Comparison of First Grade Readers and Parents Shared Reading Attitudes and Evaluation of the "Read to Somebody Everyday" Program*

1. How important do you feel it is for you to read together?		
	First Graders	Parents
Very important	86%	93%
2. How much did you enjoy reading together?		
	First Graders	Parents
Very much	84%	88%
3. Did participating in the "Read to Somebody Everyday" program help you to become a better reader of books (only first grader readers answered)?		
	First Graders	
Very much	78%	
4. Did participating in the "Read to Somebody Everyday" program change your attitude toward reading together with your child (only parents answered)?		
	Parents	
Very much	39%	

Conclusion

The "Read to Somebody Everyday" program was a success for the first grade students and parents of Green Holly School. The program provided the first grade students and parents with the necessary reading materials and incentives to have an enjoyable activity together. Finally, "Read to Somebody Everyday" program was able to reach out into the Green Holly School community and reinforce the concept that children's learning is a two-way avenue between the teachers at the school and the parents of the children at home.

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Companies Where Reading Materials Were Purchased:

Kapco
P.O. Box 626
930 Overholt Rd.
Kent, Ohio 44240
1-800-843-5368

Scholastic Inc.
P.O. Box 3720
Jefferson City, MO 65102-3720
1-800-325-6149

Upstart
Box 889
Hagerstown, MD 21741-0889
1-800-448-4887

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Blending Reader-Response Theories and Reading Comprehension Instruction

Sandra R. Wallis

In 1984 the Michigan State Board of Education adopted this definition of reading, "reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation" (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 1989). Versions of this definition have been adopted in other parts of the country as well (Cook, 1986).

These definitions reflect the current trends in literacy toward reader response. In reader-response theories, the reader is viewed as actively engaged in the process of making meaning. The meaning-making process is a transaction which occurs among the reader, the text, and the context (Rosenblatt, 1991). Purves and Beach (1972) undertook a meta-analysis of studies of response by many researchers. The definition of reader response derived by Purves and Beach from their analysis is:

> Response consists of cognition, perception and some emotional or attitudinal reaction; it involves predispositions; it changes during the course of reading; it persists and is modified after the work has been read; it may result in modification of concepts, attitudes or feelings. (Purves and Beach, 1972, p. 178)

Many reader response theorists trace their ideas to the work of Louise Rosenblatt (Probst, 1991). Interestingly, researchers studying strategic reading and reading comprehension instruction also refer to the work of Louise Rosenblatt as an influence in the changes that have occurred in views of reading (Anthony et al., 1989). In fact the Michigan definition of reading, so often cited as a concise expression of a view of reading prevailing in many instructional settings, contains elements similar to Rosenblatt's transactional theory. Rosenblatt defined reader response as a "transaction," or "an ongoing process in which the elements . . . are aspects of a total situation, each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 17). The elements she identified were the reader, the text, and the context of the reading situation.

Although the work of Louise Rosenblatt and those who approached reader response from a similar theoretical basis has often been peripherally cited in discussions of reading comprehension instruction, reader response theories have not been elaborated upon in the reading comprehension literature and, as a result, these ideas are not as widely known among reading practitioners. Raphael et al. (1991) have noted the limited view of the role of the reader—one who activates background

knowledge and employs strategic behaviors—in reading comprehension research and have suggested that reading practitioners need to re-evaluate instructional practices in light of reader response theories and research. Raphael et al. conclude:

> If we take seriously current views of where meaning resides, we must reconsider even our best practices of comprehension instruction . . . we must help students develop their abilities to respond to the text in a variety of ways, to add their voices in a community in which a text and its author(s) have been introduced. The key is to broaden and provide balance in our literacy instruction overall (Raphael et al., 1991, p. 2-3).

This article is written for the reading practitioner who is operating from a definition of reading similar to the Michigan definition and who lacks an understanding of Rosenblatt's transactional theory and other similar reader response approaches to the construction of meaning in text. This article will explore reader response theory. Within the field of reader response it will focus on Rosenblatt's transactional view and other theoretical approaches most compatible with it (for a description of major theoretical approaches to reader response, see Rosenblatt, 1991). It will trace some lines of research which have explored a transactional theory of reader response. It will conclude with an examination of the implications of reader response theory to instructional practices in reading. It is hoped that this review will highlight the importance of looking beyond the reading process to the reading experience itself. In addition, perhaps the reader will derive implications of his or her own.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory

Rosenblatt began to develop her transactional theory in what has become a seminal work, *Literature as Exploration*. First published in 1938, it has been reprinted three times, the fourth edition being released in 1983. The anniversary of its fiftieth year of publication was celebrated in a symposium at the NCTE conference in 1988 (Farrell, 1990). In the introduction to the collected volume of papers presented at that symposium, Farrell credited Rosenblatt's 1938 book as the first in the U.S. to propose a theory of literature based on reader response and focused on the reader and the text and the transaction that occurred between the two.

Rosenblatt has stated that effective teaching requires a "sound underlying theory of the nature of literary experience . . . and . . . the dynamics of literary response" (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. ix). She has noted that teachers often teach literature the way they have been taught rather than from any position grounded in literary theory. She has stated that, to make literature accessible for all, literature programs need to start with what the student brings to the printed page.

Role of the Reader

Rosenblatt focused on what she felt was the often neglected role of the reader in the literary transaction among author, text, and reader. She began with the reader's first encounter with the text, or the literary event, and traced the transaction resulting from that event. She suggested that the reader began to construct a response at the initiation of the reading event. Based on her explorations, Rosenblatt constructed the theory of literature which she labeled the transactional view. Since each

element (the reader and the text) shaped the other, she labeled the literary event as a transaction rather than as an interaction—an event in which each element remains self-contained.

Stances

Rosenblatt also introduced the idea that readers take varying stances toward a reading event based on their perceived purpose for reading. Stances vary according to whether the reading event is perceived to be a literary reading, defined as "aesthetic" reading, or an informational or nonaesthetic reading defined as "efferent" reading. The difference in these two types of reading lay in the activities performed by the reader. In efferent reading, the reader is focused on what will remain *after* the reading—the information, solution, or actions to be carried out. In aesthetic reading, the reader is centered on what is being experienced during the reading of that text. Rosenblatt saw the stances in relationship to text not as a dichotomous, one time choice between the two, but rather as representing polar points on a continuum of possible responses by the reader, each of which could be placed at points between the efferent and aesthetic extremes. She also suggested that readers use a process of selective attention to determine to what extent they will employ an aesthetic or efferent stance.

Evocation and Interpretation of Text

Rosenblatt further subdivided the aesthetic stance into "evocation"—the process of constructing a response during the reading of the text—and "interpretation"—the process of reflecting on the text following the reading event.

The evocation of the text is a process of "living through" the text: the reader anticipates events and meanings; revises expectations; and constructs a growing, frequently revised, meaning for the text. The reader's attention is focused on the sensations, feelings, images, and rhythms of language that the text evokes. Rosenblatt felt that the reader's meaning of the text is constructed in that evocation.

Only after a work had been evoked could it be interpreted, that is, become the object of reflection and analysis. Even though Rosenblatt believed that critical analysis followed the evocation of the work, she did recognize that, at times, some elements of evaluation and critical analysis were interwoven in the evocation of the work. However, she maintained that the principal occupation of the reader during the evocation was the "living through" of the literary experience, rather than evaluation or critical analysis.

The Literary Experience

In addition to exploring the transaction that occurred between the reader and the text—the literary event—Rosenblatt also examined the nature of the literary experience—the impact of a reading on the reader's view of the world. She theorized that the literary experience offers readers not only literary values but an approach to life—a way of looking at self or others, an image of people working out a common fate, or the absorption or rejection of certain kinds of experiences, feelings, or social attitudes. In order to enhance the literary experience, she suggested that readers need to encounter literature that appeals to their intellectual, emotional, and

experiential background. The reader's particular linguistic experiences provide the raw materials from which personal meaning is constructed. The teacher functions as a facilitator of this transactional process. Facts about the time period that literature is set, or the characteristics of the genre and form have value in shaping the literary experience only to the extent that they help clarify and enrich an individual's experience of the literature.

Rosenblatt used student responses she had collected to support her contention that social and psychological insights developed as a by-product of literature as an aesthetic experience. In the literary experience, as Rosenblatt envisioned it, "the text embodies verbal stimuli toward a special kind of intense and ordered experience—sensuous, intellectual, emotional—out of which social insight might arise" (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. 32). She maintained that, in order for that to occur, literature instruction must begin with the student's response and help that reader see how the author's artistic devices heighten his/her experience with the literature.

Rosenblatt did not negate the importance of the text in the transaction; she maintained that not every response was as good as every other and reiterated that response must be grounded in, and substantiated by the text. Rosenblatt also addressed the need to balance the "meaning" of the text constructed by the reader through "linguistic and life memories" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 57) and the meaning intended for the text by the author. She suggested that readers respond to textual signs or cues in the text, and further, that a reader's response has to be substantiated through reference to those textual signs. Thus, though each response is unique, there are common elements among responses and there could, indeed, be responses that simply are not supported by the text. Readers' shared discussions of literary text become a means to clarify and confirm response. In these discussions, differences in response should be analyzed by returning to the text to seek confirmation. The goal of this kind of literature study is to help students create more valid, defensible responses.

In summary, it is important to note several key points in Rosenblatt's work. First, readers vary their stance in reading text according to the type of text read—literary or informational. Rosenblatt labeled the literary stance "aesthetic" and the informational stance "efferent." Second, each reading of text is neither aesthetic nor efferent, but can be located at some point on a continuum between the aesthetic and efferent extremes. Third, the reader's center of attention alters during the course of an aesthetic reading; the reader focuses on constructing a response during the reading—Rosenblatt called this "evocation"—and turns his/her attention to interpretation and critical response only after the meaning of the text has been constructed. Finally, Rosenblatt assessed the impact of what she called the literature, or literary, experience on the formation of the reader's view of life. She indicated that literary experiences offer the reader new ways of looking at universal problems, emotions, and situations.

Alternate Views on Reader Response

Other theorists have presented views about reader response, but each of these has approached the topic in a slightly different way. One of the most reseached views is that of Britton (1970) who defined stances readers took relative to a text

similarly to Rosenblatt, although he looked at the reader's role differently. He viewed the reader as being a participant or a spectator. Britton's participant role was similar to Rosenblatt's efferent stance; the reader was someone Britton said was "participating in the world's affairs" (Britton, 1970, p. 104). The focus in that role was the need to act and decide. He described the spectator role as that of someone "on holiday" from the world's affairs, not taking part in the experiences, but rather contemplating them, enjoying them, reconstructing them. Since the spectator did not need to act upon the information in the text, this kind of reader was free to evaluate the experience and attend to details of language use—for example, the patterns and forms on which the participant had no time to focus. Britton, like Rosenblatt, saw the reader's prior experiences as the key to the interaction with the text. He noted that "what the writer communicates to the reader is made out of the raw material the reader already possesses" (Britton, 1970, p. 116). Also like Rosenblatt, Britton recognized the need for a "living through" or evocation of the work prior to evaluation or critical response. He cited the need of the "spectator" to withhold judgment until the reading of the text was completed.

Britton's theoretical construct has been investigated by others. The concept of the reader's stance as primarily a continuum between a participant-spectator role was adopted by Applebee (1978) in exploring children's developing concepts of story from early years through adolescence. In a study of young readers, Galda (1982) employed the concept of a spectator stance to study the oral responses of three fifth–grade girls to works of contemporary realistic fiction.

Horizons and Points of Reference

In studying the responses of adolescents to literary and informational text Langer, (1989, 1990) noted that adolescents varied their orientation to text types without prompting. She described the orientation to literary text as "Reaching Toward a Horizon of Possibilities" and the orientation to informational text as "Maintaining a Point of Reference." In "Reaching Toward a Horizon of Possibilities," the literary orientation, Langer suggested that the sense of the whole changed and developed as the "envisionment" unfolded. She noted that readers revised and clarified new ideas, trying to understand these new concepts as they related to their sense of the whole text.

On the other hand, in "Maintaining a Point of Reference," the informational orientation, Langer suggested that the sense of the whole provided a steady reference point as students tried to understand new ideas. Those new ideas added clarity to the sense of the whole but rarely changed it.

Langer compared her theoretical position to Rosenblatt and Britton. She noted, "although developed for different purposes, each set of concepts deals in some way with the qualitative differences in literary and non-literary experiences" (1989, p. 3).

Summary of Theoretical Positions on Stances

Although there are differences in the approaches Rosenblatt, Britton, Applebee, Galda, Langer and others have taken toward the stances readers take in reading text,

there are a number of common elements across their theories. First, each has noted that the way the reader approaches a text varies according to that individual's purpose. Each has noted profound differences in the way readers approach literary text as opposed to informational text. Although each has discussed reading informational text or reading for informational purposes, there was little or no elaboration of the informational stance or informational text reading. Second, most—with the possible exception of Langer—have noted that the stance for any given reading event was not "pure." That is, readers, during each reading occasion, regardless of whether the text is a literary or informational piece, operate on a continuum between literary and informational reading. Third, each has recognized the need for meaning construction during the transaction between the reader and the text. This has to precede the evaluation, or critical, response. Finally, each has noted the importance of what the reader brings to the text in the construction of meaning.

Many researchers have studied and theorized about response. What have these researchers learned through their studies of response? Some conclusions from the research have been summarized by Probst (1991):

1. The approach to literature taken by individual teachers does affect the content of the responses from the pupils.
2. Literary response is a learned behavior.
3. Literary merit cannot be the only criteria for selecting texts. Students' interests and abilities as well as the range of response the curriculum hopes to foster must also be considered.
4. Literary experiences can link to social experiences to enlarge students' understanding of the social world. However, it must be noted that teachers often impose their personal interpretation of the literary experience on the reading of the text, stifling opportunities for students to make connections between the literature they were reading and their own lives.
5. There is a need for the reader to construct a meaning for the work (Rosenblatt's evocation) prior to critical evaluation. Yet teachers may ask students to evaluate critically during the first reading of a text.

Limitations to Response Research and Theory

Much of reader response theory is still at that theoretical stage. Research is needed to confirm and elaborate upon many of the ideas. One specific area of criticism lies in the fact that little more than cursory acknowledgement has been given to the fact that stances and response patterns vary in reading informational text.

For example, Rosenblatt discriminated between an aesthetic and an efferent stance. She noted that readers vary their stance according to the type of information read—literary or informational. She further noted that some informational text is read aesthetically and that readers, in certain contexts such as the study of literature, may read literary text efferently. However, her elaboration of her theory is limited to the exploration of literary reading and the aesthetic stance. Her work sheds little light on efferent reading.

Although Langer indicated that she had studied the experiences of students

"during their reading of short stories, poems, social studies texts, and science texts" (Langer, 1991, p. 6), her research draws primarily on her study of literary text reading. Her conclusions related to informational text reading lack the elaboration and detail afforded literary reading.

At present, reader response theories offer limited insight into the reading of expository text or reading for informative purposes. However the conclusions that the reader response theorists and researchers have put forth do have implications for instruction in reading. If the reader does indeed need to engage in the full range of response in order to construct a full understanding and appreciation of the text, it is a challenge to contemporary methods in literature and content classrooms to provide opportunities for full response and to foster that response.

Conclusion

Over fifty years ago Louise Rosenblatt proposed a literary theory which remains today as a cornerstone of our current ideas about reading and the study of literature. A variety of theorists and researchers have sought to confirm and expand her theory or have constructed theories of their own which closely align with hers. Systems for studying and classifying response have been developed and refined. Yet instruction in classrooms still remains largely unaffected. Assessment practices have not been altered. Our students cannot afford to wait another fifty years for the ideas proposed by Rosenblatt and others like Britton, Squire, Applebee, and Langer to begin to influence the instructional opportunities they receive in their classrooms. Fortunately, there is evidence that these ideas are beginning to influence instruction, but these efforts seem limited to individual teachers or schools. We must find ways to bring about change on a much larger scale if we hope to significantly alter instruction for all students.

Reader response theories have much to suggest to reading practitioners seeking to enhance students' comprehension of text. It is important that those who would reshape reading comprehension instruction, especially as we move to models which are more literature-based, become familiar with the ideas being formulated by those who desire to shape a reader response-based approach to literature instruction. Similarities between reader response theories and reading comprehension research seem greater than the differences. Hopefully, like Raphael (1991), more researchers will begin to bridge the distance between the two in order to aid the practitioner who needs to assist students in developing strategies for reading effectively and to engage students in response. At present, it is necessary for the practitioner to know both bodies of research and to seek ways to blend them in the kiln of real classrooms.

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The *Write* to Learn Mathematics

Bob M. Drake and Linda B. Amspaugh

There is currently a trend to incorporate writing assignments as a part of mathematics instruction. This practice began, or at least gained recognition and momentum, with the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement (Maimon, 1984). It is reinforced by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics *Standards* (1989) which recommend mathematical communication as a primary focus of instruction, as well as by the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English.

Those of us whose primary interest has been in teaching mathematics are often not well informed about the types of writing which students might do. Furthermore, we may not know how writing assignments might be used to help students more effectively learn and understand mathematics content. This paper has four goals: (a) to address the rationale for using writing to help students learn mathematics concepts; (b) to describe different types of writing which may be used in mathematics classrooms; (c) to suggest ways writing might be used to assess student understanding of concepts and procedural knowledge; and (d) to suggest that an impetus for changing instructional strategies might come from students' writing.

Rationale

Langer and Applebee (1987) did a comprehensive study in which they examined the effects that writing had on the learning of content area materials. They found that students learned more about the content being studied when writing was incorporated into the curriculum than when the emphasis was just on reading and studying. There were three primary ways that the learning was facilitated: (a) students gained relevant knowledge and experience as they prepared for new activities; (b) they reviewed and consolidated what they knew or had learned; (c) they were able to reformulate and extend ideas and experiences.

Writing requires understanding. Students often complain that they "understand it" when the teacher works problems on the board but "don't understand it" when they attempt to complete assignments by themselves. Everyone has heard teachers express the idea that they never really "knew" something until they had to teach it. These comments illustrate the distinction between a shallow processing of information and a deeper understanding of concepts. The use of language to describe something requires a deeper processing of information than does following a

description provided by someone else. Keith (1990) wrote that we ". . . may think we understand something when we only recognize it; we confuse familiarity with understanding." Asking students to write provides a mechanism by which they necessarily are aware of their (mis)understandings.

Brown (1991) suggests that whole language techniques, which include many writing activities, create a context in which students learn mathematics because the instruction is interesting and relevant. She briefly describes a variety of writing activities which help students to recall and organize information, and to synthesize mathematical concepts.

According to *A Question of Thinking* (California Assessment Program, 1989), fewer than 25% of the students in California can write accurately about problems which are given to them. This is likely a result of too few opportunities to express mathematical ideas in language as opposed to merely memorizing and manipulating mathematical symbols. Nahrgang (1986) points out that it is important for students to have "the opportunity to formulate, organize, internalize, and evaluate" mathematical concepts (p. 461). While oral expression is also beneficial, writing allows students to review thoughts and modify them as the need becomes apparent. It makes the process more concrete.

Types of Writing

There are many kinds of writing that are appropriate and helpful for students in mathematics classes. Though the types of writing we typically think of may be things like research papers, lecture notes, summaries of magazine articles, or even "proofs," these tend to be formal kinds of writing. Formal writing is certainly appropriate to accomplish some goals. However, the type of writing better suited to the day-to-day class routine is *informal* writing (Keith, 1990). This type of writing might best be characterized as writing that isn't examined for spelling, grammatical, or punctuation errors. It is solely intended to clarify the thinking of the students and teachers about mathematics content. (In other situations, this kind of informal writing is frequently used when taking notes during a phone conversation or making out a shopping list.) The things for which your English teacher chastised you aren't especially important in this type of writing. The purpose of this writing is to help focus thinking on the topic at hand.

Here are several types of informal writing that may be of use in a mathematics classroom:

Reading Logs

As students read material or explanations in their text they may write questions about word meanings or interpretations, about how this concept relates to other material covered previously, about where this concept might be used, or about what they believe might be covered next. Any questions or comments should be included, but the comments should focus primarily on the relationship of the current material to what the student already knows.

Although most instruction in mathematics does not include independent textbook reading, many teachers have their students read trade books which are related to the topic being studied (see list of sample titles in Appendix A). After reading the trade books, students then take the ideas presented and relate them to what has been discussed in class. This gives students the opportunity to learn to make connections between mathematics, reading, writing, and their own conceptions of the topic.

Journals

One type of journal commonly used is a "double entry" journal. In this system students use paper divided in half similar to a stenographer's pad. As the students work a problem on the left half of the paper, their reasons, questions, insights, or other comments are made on the right half of the paper next to the part of the problem being addressed. This may be used for computation problems or problem solving tasks with equal effectiveness. Benefits of this system are that it quickly allows the teacher to identify areas of misconception or of particular insight by the student.

Letters

A common use of letters is to have students write to a "friend" (either imaginary or real) to explain how a particular operation is done and why it is used (Sipka, 1990). The reasoning behind the mathematical process, as well as the "steps" involved, should be included in the letter so that the friend will understand clearly and can use what is being explained. The intent is not to "send" the letter (otherwise, grammar and punctuation would be important), but to provide a context which requires the need for accurate and complete information. The benefit of this type of writing is that it helps students recognize and understand what they believe they already know. Using this writing task may help students recognize what they have misunderstood during a class discussion or explanation so that students will not reply, "Gee, I understood how to do these problems yesterday in class, but when I got home I couldn't do them!"

In-class Writing

There are two types of writing included under this heading: "focused" and "free." *Focused* writing is in response to a specific question from the teacher. Questions asked might be, "Why do you think manhole covers are always round?" or "Why do roofs in Wisconsin always have a slope while roofs in Arizona frequently are flat?" Notice that the writing doesn't have to involve computational problems, and that it may allow students to voice opinions and speculate on various kinds of hypotheses.

Free writing affords opportunities for students to put ideas and thoughts on paper, or to express feelings. No specific assignment is given by the teacher regarding the content of student writing. Students are simply asked to write for the next three minutes, about anything they wish related to mathematics. Frequently, emotions

toward the material or feelings about mathematics in general will surface. Sometimes misconceptions, frustrations, or questions also will appear.

Math Autobiographies

An autobiography is a story about oneself. A "math autobiography" is about the student's experiences with mathematics. This might take the form of describing encounters with situations involving mathematics or mathematical thinking, and of how these encounters were resolved. It might also include personal tales of learning experiences with a topic and how that learning was accomplished, or of "how I learned to understand . . . (fill in the topic)." In other situations this type of writing might be formal, but in this context the purpose is to develop and encourage one's thinking about mathematics, and awareness of where mathematics is used.

Troubleshooting

When students make errors on work they have completed, often all they look at are the grades on their papers. Rarely do they spend time analyzing why their answers may have been wrong. The troubleshooting technique (Evans, 1984) requires that students analyze why they make mistakes. Students must look at the process used, explain why the answer was incorrect, and then provide the correct answer. Another related approach is for the teacher to provide samples of typical error patterns for students to analyze and write about. Having students discover mistakes made by other students can help encourage them to recognize similar mistakes in their own work.

Assessment

After students have written, the remaining question is, "What do I do with this?" As teachers read students' logs and journals, they are able to determine whether or not the students comprehended the topics being studied. As students describe the relationships among ideas or as they describe the steps they used to figure out answers to problems, teachers can easily ascertain if the understanding of process and product is accurate.

As students write letters, they are being asked to summarize, to review what they know about the topic, and to put together knowledge they may have acquired from a variety of sources. To write a letter explaining how to solve a problem also implies that the writer must be somewhat aware of point of view. In other words, "If I'm writing to someone who knows nothing about the topic, what does that person need to know to understand the concept I'm trying to describe?" This kind of question forces students to look at the problem from a broader perspective than simply computing an answer, and gives the teacher much more insight about the kind of thinking the student is able to accomplish.

In-class focused writing allows teachers to assess students' specific understandings and thinking strategies. Without these understandings and strategies, students often simply operate in a lock-step, rote manner as they compute answers to problems. If teachers know that their students understand and can think about mathematics, a variety of mathematical connections can be made.

Most teachers are not comfortable using this type of assessment without having something more concrete as a basis for ascertaining grades. One way to make this type of assessment more objective and concrete is to devise a checklist (Appendix B) which includes a variety of criteria upon which the students are to be judged. Then as the teacher reads the material, checks can be made so that grades can be determined.

Information from free in-class writing is also important. Attitudes toward mathematics can have a significant impact on student performance.

Modification of Instructional Practices

Many times we, as teachers, have the sense that our students have not understood what we have just taught. If we can recognize the source of students' frustrations, we can modify instruction to address their feelings and misunderstandings about the concept taught. This modification of instructional practices might curtail their misunderstandings and the feelings of failure which many students adopt.

As teachers read students' journals, autobiographies, or reading logs, it may become clear whether there needs to be reteaching or whether an error was simply one of computation. Examining students' writings may be one of the most effective ways for teachers to learn if students still have questions. Writing can provide insights into student misunderstandings of concepts, but equally important, it can help teachers become more effective. Frequently, something that makes perfect sense to the teacher may be incomprehensible to children.

Ashlock (1976) once described a child who had been taught to start computation problems "on the side [of the room] by the piano." The next year, however, the piano was on the other side of the room. The student missed nearly half the computation problems that had been solved correctly the previous year. Understanding why children do things can help us become better teachers. Telling students to "start on the side by the piano" makes perfect sense to adults because we understand that the emphasis is on the direction (in this case, the right) and not on finding a piano. Children frequently hear things differently than we intend, and having students write about what they know can help us avoid repeating those mistakes.

Conclusion

It has been well documented that using manipulatives in mathematics instruction is an effective technique to help children learn mathematical concepts. The use of writing in mathematics might be perceived as one more kind of manipulative. Rather than manipulating objects, students are asked to manipulate ideas. These ideas, once they are made concrete in writing, can be used by both the children and the teacher to make the process of understanding mathematics easier.

It must be repeated that the purpose of having students write is not to correct grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Learning to write is a developmental process just as learning to speak is developmental. The goal is to have students express their thoughts to help clarify what they do or do not understand about mathematics, and to help us as teachers modify how we instruct students to help them make sense of mathematics concepts.

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Appendix A

Sample Trade Books Which Use Mathematics Concepts

Anno, M. 1983. Illustrated by Mitsumasa Anno. *Anno's mysterious multiplying jar*, New York: Philomel Books.

Bang M. 1983. *Ten, nine, eight*, New York: Greenwillow Books.

Burns, M. 1976. *The book of think*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Burns, M. 1978. *This book is about time*, Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Burns, M. 1975. *The I hate mathematics book*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Burns, M. 1982. *Math for smarty pants*, California: Yolla Bolly Press.

Ehlert, L. 1989. *Color zoo*, New York, Lippencott.

Ehlert, L. 1990. *Fish eyes* (*A book you can count on*). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Fadiman, C. Ed. 1962. *The mathematical magpie*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Feelings, M. 1971. *Moja means one, a Swahili counting book*, New York: Dial.

Gardner, M. 1984. *Gotcha*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Hutchins, P. 1986. *The doorbell rang*, New York: Greenwillow Books.

Hutchins, P. 1970. *Clocks and more clocks*, New York: Macmillan.

Juster, N. 1963. *The dot and the line: A romance in lower mathematics*, Random House.

Juster, N. 1961. *The phantom tollbooth*, Random House.

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Schwartz, D. 1989. *If you made a million*, New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Appendix B

Criteria for Journal Evaluation

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
Thoroughness of comments—Are the comments just superficial or do they demonstrate deeper processing? Do your writings appear to be a restatement of someone else's words, or an interpretation in your own words? Have you mentioned applications or relationships to other material?					
Completeness—Have all important points been discussed? Are there omissions of information?					
Understanding—Are the ideas correctly understood? What evidence illustrates that understanding?					
Personal connections—Is the information connected to your personal observations and experiences?					
Growth—Is there evidence that your understanding has increased? Did you learn something that you didn't know before?					
Inquiry—Have you thought of other questions? Have you asked any additional questions not yet answered?					
Problem completion—Does it appear that problems have been attempted or merely "skimmed-over"?					
General quality—What is the over-all quality of your work in this journal?					

The items included above are only examples to illustrate the types of items a teacher might use. The specific items used should reflect the grade level of the students and the guidance given by the teacher for the writing assignment. The evaluation criteria should be presented and discussed with students prior to their writings. Opportunities for revision must be available so that students may modify and correct their thinking.

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Intermediate Grade Students' Metacognitive Awareness of the Writing Process

Natalie Felsher, Judy Ramoy Johnstone, and Priscilla P. Waynant

Introduction

No development has been more influential in making inroads toward understanding and improving writing instruction than the writing process. The writing process presents for the writer a series of choices and decisions guided by critical thinking skills and specific strategies for reflection (Atwell, 1987). During the late 1970's and early 1980's the importance of the writing process was discussed by key researchers such as Atwell, Calkins, and Graves. This discussion led to its eventual usage in the classroom, often with the steps posted on the classroom walls, and often demonstrated by the teacher to familiarize students with the process. Teachers have had approximately a decade to assimilate this information for their own understanding and to incorporate the writing process into their literacy instruction. Why then did many educators assume that student writers would be able to look at charts, observe the demonstrations, and then internalize the procedure in a short period of time? Like Lardner (1989) and Stotsky (1983), this study suggests that teaching the writing process and posting the charts for students' reference is only a small segment of how students learn to internalize the writing process into their repertoire of useful procedures. Observations have been made within the classroom setting that students are able to "parrot" the steps of the process. The important question however is, do the students fully understand the implications of what they are reiterating?

As Lardner (1989) has stated, ". . . it is essential that the implications of the students' comments be held in mind." Students must be reflective of how and why they use the steps of the writing process. They must know that each step, properly employed, will enhance their pieces, help them become better writers, and hopefully make their pieces finished products. The writing process within the classroom enables students to work alone or as a community encouraging, enhancing, and even solving problems with their written work (Calkins, 1983; Graser, 1983; Graves, 1989).

In this pilot study the investigators selected teachers of fourth and fifth grade classes who stated on a prestudy questionnaire that the writing process was an integral part of their literacy curriculum. The purpose of the study was to ascertain students' perceptions of the writing process and how these same students perceived its use within the classroom and in their daily lives.

Methods

Subjects

There were six participating teachers who served as cooperating teachers for a junior level field placement for elementary education majors at a local Maryland college. Six junior level students were placed into these cooperating teachers' classrooms for observation and supervised practice teaching. Within these classrooms, 36 fourth and fifth grade students comprised the sample population for this pilot study. Due to attrition, the data analyzed was based on 23 students (10 poor readers and 13 good readers).

Materials

A prestudy interview (see Appendix A) probed students' metacognitive understanding of the writing process. A second interview, the "think aloud" (see Appendix B), was used immediately after the final writing assignment so that students could reflect upon their actual writing process. The reliability of the interviews was established by having certified reading specialists rank order the questions on the instruments according to their importance to the writing process.

Procedures

In February, cooperating teachers identified good and poor readers within their classes. Identification was based on teacher judgment after having worked with these students for half a year. The teachers ranked all of the students in their classes according to reading ability. Six students from each class (three from the top quartile and three from the bottom quartile) were randomly selected as subjects for the study.

In January, the college students received training in interviewing techniques. They were given many opportunities to practice the interviewing process which had been modeled by the course instructor. These students then worked in pairs administering the interviews to one another during guided practice sessions.

The college students administered two interviews to each of the elementary school students during the spring semester. The first interview was administered in February prior to the lessons using the writing process. During February, March, and April, the college students received instruction on the writing process and writers' workshop within their seminar meetings. They incorporated this information while planning and teaching their writing lessons to the elementary school students during their field placements. At the end of April, the college students individually administered the final interview, the "think aloud," to the randomly selected good and poor readers. These interviews were specific to the students' own completed written pieces.

Analysis

Scoring Procedures

Three independent raters analyzed and coded the students' responses to both interviews. Scores ranged from 0 to 1. Non-metacognitive responses received a score of 0, mixed responses received a score of 0.5, and metacognitive responses received a score of 1.

A response was classified as a non-metacognitive response when it included only a mechanical component such as, ". . . get my paper and sit up straight in my chair, sharpen my pencil, make sure my hands are ready." Metacognitive responses were classified as those which specifically addressed the writing process and the thoughts of the writer. Examples of this type of response are, ". . . I start thinking about . . . , I reread and if I don't have everything in it I write more. I form a picture in my mind." Mixed responses included mechanical and metacognitive responses as exemplified by, ". . . I have to relax my hand and reread it."

Results

The Pre- and Post-interviews were used to gather information about good and poor readers and their understanding of the writing process. There was a substantial difference in intermediate grade good and poor readers' metacognitive awareness of the writing process over a period of time.

As indicated in Table 1, the means for Group 1 (poor readers) and Group 2 (good readers) on the Pre- and Post-interviews show some improvement from the writing lessons.

Table 1 *Mean Scores of Interviews Reported as a Function of Good and Poor Readers*

	Means	
	Pre-interview	Post-interview
Poor readers (n = 10)	0.68 (.162)	0.79 (.289)
Good readers (n = 13)	0.64 (.023)	0.93 (.167)

(Standard Deviations in parentheses).

Results show that the two groups, as well as the individual subjects within the groups, show movement from non-metacognitive to metacognitive responses over time (pre- to post-interview). Given the size of this pilot, these results are encouraging for future investigation.

Responses to Pretest Interview

In responding to question number 10, "What could your teacher do or give you to help you write better?" students responded with relatively non-metacognitive thoughts. Handwriting and paper and pencil position seemed to be very important to both good (GR) and poor readers (PR) as evidenced by these responses:

- Teach you to learn the letters in cursive. (PR)
- My teacher could give me a cursive pattern. (PR)
- A list of ABC's in cursive. (PR)
- Give me a pencil with a grip. (GR)
- Some indenting tips. (GR)

Students' responses to question number nine, "Do you find anything hard to do in writing? What?" were interesting in that some students equated physical pain with difficulty; yet others expressed what they found hard to do when they write with difficulty. It was clear that the question was interpreted differently by different students.

- Yes, my arm gets sore. (PR)
- Yes, I have to hold the page and pencil right, make letters write. (PR)
- Yes, spelling. (PR)
- Yes, think of ideas. (GR)
- Most of the stuff I don't like isn't hard. I just don't like them, like bare-bones summaries. (GR)

Students' responses to the first question, "The teacher wants you to write a story. How do you get yourself ready to write?" revealed initial qualitative differences between good and poor readers' comments. More of the good readers responded with metacognitive comments than did poor readers as evidenced by these responses:

- I make a web. (GR)
- I picture what I'm writing about in my mind. (GR)
- Well, first I think about if I want it to be spooky or not, and then I have to choose the characters' names, get all the materials and start. (GR)
- I sharpen my pencil, think of a story, indent it, then I start writing. (GR)
- I get a piece of paper and write a heading on it. (PR)
- Think about what I'm going to write down. (PR)

Responses to Posttest Interviews

The responses to the "think alouds" were from three subjects, two good readers and one poor readers. The responses of the good readers show their awareness of literacy, author's craft, and their attention to detail. In contrast, the poor reader responded with limited thought and perseverated. In fact, the poor reader often restated the question itself as a response. Responses to the first question on the post-interview, "What do you do first?" illustrate this point:

- For the first thing we did, you know, with how we feel about things—well, I really thought about something I have feeling about. (GR)
- I was looking at other people's ideas and everyone was doing—so I did *The Simpson's*. I wrote everything I knew about *The Simpson's* on my prewriting. (GR)
- First, I thought what I'm going to write and then I wrote it. (PR)

Responses to the second probe, "What do you next?" also illustrate this pattern:

- You told us to just start writing whatever came into your head about the thing, right? I liked that because I didn't have to worry about spelling or nothing. (GR)

- I got another sheet, and I put all my ideas into a paragraph—rough draft. (GR)
- Kept thinking about it more. (PR)

In responding to the third probe, "If you got stuck when you were writing, what did you do?" the poor readers' perseveration with thought rather than action is clear whereas the internalization of the writing process for the good readers seemed to prevent "getting stuck":

- I really didn't get stuck because we wrote about whatever we wanted to and that made it easy. (GR)
- Not really, because I like *The Simpson's*, and I know a lot about them. (GR)
- Kept thinking about it more. (PR)

Discussion

When students were given opportunities to think aloud (see Appendix B) and think and report about the writing process concurrently within the classroom instructional program, their metacognitive awareness of what writing is, how it is used effectively, and how to see themselves as writers improved. In other words, these students, both good and poor readers, were more likely to report with comprehension what they did during the writing process when given questions to reflect upon in addition to using the actual process.

The teachers themselves gained knowledge of the student as a writer when these interviews were conducted and reviewed, since interviews are examples of authentic assessment. Instruction can benefit from the application of this new knowledge about these student writers. These interviews could allow teachers to carry out action research within their own classrooms and may afford them the opportunity to reflect on their instruction and assess how the instruction was understood by students.

As a pilot study with a limited sample size, any conclusions that can be drawn from the results presented here are tentative. However, the results do substantiate the need for further investigation into how teachers teach and incorporate the writing process into their instruction. The need to determine whether students have internalized the process or whether they are just "parroting" the rules is critical. The results also suggest the need for teacher/student interviews that provide teachers with glimpses of the learner's **thinking.** The interviews and think aloud procedures used in this investigation provide models of good strategies that learners can use to reflect upon their understanding of the writing process. Having students consistently reflect upon such questions enables students to truly internalize and readily apply the writing process rather than "parroting" the rules.

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Appendix A

Pretest—Interview

1. The teacher wants you to write a story. How do you get yourself ready to write?
2. What is writing? What do you do when you write?
3. Do you ever try to picture in your mind what you are writing? Why?
4. If you want to tell a Kindergarten child what things you need to do when you write, what would you tell that child?
5. If you want to tell a Kindergarten child what you need to do when you want to make something you have written better, what would you tell that child to do?
6. Do you ever stop while your writing to reread, edit, or revise? Why?
7. What do you do when you get stuck when you're writing? When you can't think of anything to write?
8. What things does a person have to do to be a good writer?
9. Do you find anything hard to do in writing? What?
10. What could your teacher do or give you to help you write better?

Appendix B

Post-test—Think Aloud

1. What did you do first?
   Probe: To get started?
   To prepare yourself?
2. What did you do next?
   Probe: How did you proceed?
3. Did you get stuck and what did you do?
   Probe: What were your strategies?
4. What did you do to make sure you have completed the assignment correctly?
   Probe: What strategies did you use?

LITERACY: ISSUES AND PRACTICES, Volume 10, 1993

The Use of Retellings for Portfolio Assessment of Reading Comprehension

Patricia S. Koskinen, Linda B. Gambrell and Barbara A. Kapinus

At present there is a resounding call for more authentic classroom approaches to reading assessment that capture students' progress over time in using both reading processes and knowledge about reading (Valencia, McGinley, & Pearson, 1990). In addition, there is support for encouraging teachers to use their expertise as evaluators of students' progress (Johnston, 1987). One approach to assessment reflecting these trends and gaining popularity is the use of portfolios of students' work collected over time (Valencia, 1990). The contents of portfolios, however, vary from classroom to classroom and teachers still seek support in deciding what to include and how to evaluate the components.

One promising component for portfolios is retellings. When students retell what they read, they provide insights into their comprehension processes and their ability to use knowledge of text or story structures. Retelling is a natural classroom activity that reflects a very real form of communication used beyond the classroom. Retelling is one way readers of all ages in a variety of contexts communicate what they have understood from their reading. In addition to being authentic, retelling also promotes language and literacy growth. Retelling opportunities that encourage children to talk about text enhance listening comprehension (Morrow, 1985, 1986) as well as reading comprehension (Gambrell, Miller, King, & Thompson, 1989; Gambrell, Pfeiffer, & Wilson, 1985; Rose, Cundick, & Higbee, 1984). Research has also shown that practice in retelling over time results in significant improvements in the quantity and quality of the retellings of both proficient and less-proficient readers (Gambrell, Koskinen, & Kapinus, 1991).

In addition to being useful as an instructional strategy, retelling has also been used in many reading studies as an assessment of comprehension (Golden & Pappas, 1987). According to Johnston (1983), "Retelling is the most straightforward assessment . . . of the result of text-reader interaction" (p. 54). Retelling requires the reader to organize text information in order to provide a personal rendition of the text. Engaging in retelling focuses the reader's attention on restructuring text in a holistic fashion. Because retellings can reflect student growth over time, they can be an important part of classroom assessment. However, if teachers are to use retellings as portfolio components to demonstrate student growth in reading proficiency, they need reliable and efficient means of evaluating retellings.

The present research examined methods for scoring retellings, with a particular emphasis on the sensitivity of these methods to students' increased proficiency over time and to the usefulness of these approaches for informing instruction. In a prior

study we used a finely-grained text-based procedure of analyzing students' retellings. In the current study, we were interested in developing a more holistic, qualitative procedure which would be more sensitive to literacy qualities specific to narrative text, as well as being reliable and efficient. This study, therefore, had two specific purposes. The first purpose was to reexamine the effects of practice in retelling on the comprehension performance of proficient and less-proficient readers. The second purpose was to compare and contrast two methods of scoring retellings.

Method

Subjects

The data from this study were drawn from a previous study described in Gambrell, et al. (1991). The subjects were 48 fourth-grade students (24 proficient and 24 less-proficient readers). Criteria for inclusion in the study were as follows: a score at the 20th percentile or above on the Cognitive Abilities Test for all subjects; a score at the 41st percentile or below on the reading comprehension section of the California Achievement Test (CAT) for the less-proficient readers; and a score at the 68th percentile or above on the reading comprehension section of the CAT for the proficient readers.

Materials

Four narrative stories for proficient readers were written at the fourth-grade readability level and four narrative stories for less-proficient readers were written at the second-grade level. These eight stories were selected and then adapted for use in this study from basal readers that were not used in the school system curriculum (Ginn, 1982; Macmillan, 1986; Riverside, 1986). One of the major criteria for story selection was the clear presence of basic elements of story structure. The stories used with the proficient readers ranged in length from 740 to 1,038 words and those used with the less-proficient readers ranged in length from 357 to 527 words.

Procedure

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four story-order conditions within each proficiency level. The stories were counter-balanced across the four practice sessions to control for order effects.

Subjects met individually with a researcher twice a week over a two-week period. They were informed that during these sessions they would read several stories and have a chance to practice becoming good story tellers. To provide a meaningful context for the retellings, subjects were told that their stories would be tape recorded so that younger children could listen to them tell the story. Each story was introduced with a brief motivational statement that included mention of what the story was about and the title of the story. The students were then instructed to read the story silently. At the conclusion of the silent reading, the subjects were instructed to "take a minute or two to think about how you will tell the story. Let me know when you are ready to tell the story into the tape recorder." If after a two-minute period subjects had not begun retelling the story, they were asked "Are you ready

to begin?'' The researchers then began the retelling by recording the following: ''The story for today is (story title), and the story teller is (subject's name).'' Subjects then proceeded to retell the story. These retelling procedures were used for each of the four retelling sessions.

Scoring

The retellings in the Gambrell et al. (1991) study were analyzed for literary elements with text-based outlines that delineated the number of basic story structure elements (Thorndyke, 1977) including identification of setting, theme, plot episodes, and resolution. The use of this procedure required an in-depth analysis of each story before scoring as well as detailed analysis of retellings. The total number of story structure elements across the four stories read by the proficient readers was 78, and the total for the stories read by the less proficient readers was 70. Positive elaborations and negative intrusions in each retelling were also counted. Interrater reliability was 95% for the story structure elements and 94% for the propositional analysis that included elaborations and intrusions.

The present study analyzed these retellings with a more holistic procedure. This scoring procedure used a four-point scale (0 = no evidence to 3 = strong evidence) to evaluate the literary elements of theme, coherence, major plot episodes, major plot elaborations, story structure awareness, and use of stylistic devices (Figure 1). This procedure was developed using several resources (Barnhart, 1990; K. Feathers, personal communication, September 15, 1991; Irwin & Mitchell, 1983; Morrow, 1988). Our purpose was to explore the use of a simple and more efficient guide for scoring. Interrater reliability was 94% for the scoring of these literary elements.

Results

Correlated t tests were used to determine if significant differences existed between Session 1 and Session 4 regarding the scores on the following literary elements: theme, coherence, major plot episodes, major plot elaborations, story structure elements, and stylistic devices. Tests were conducted on the interdependency of the dependent measures to establish the appropriateness of univariate versus multivariate tests. Dependence was determined by using Pearson's correlation. When the dependent measures were shown to be correlated, the multivariate Hotellings T square was applied. Bartlett's test of sphericity was used when there were two dependent measures.

The means and standard deviations for literary elements recalled by proficient and less-proficient readers are presented in Tables 1 and 2. For the proficient readers, there were significant differences with respect to major plot elaborations $t(23) = -2.23$, $p < .05$, stylistic devices, $t(23) = -4.10$, $p < .01$, and total literary elements score, $t(23) = -2.23$, $p < .05$. There were no significant differences in the literary elements across sessions for less-proficient readers, $t(23) = -1.70$, $p > .05$.

Discussion

The results of the text-based analysis of literary elements that was conducted in Gambrell, et al. (1991) differed substantially from the results of the more holistic

LITERARY ELEMENTS FOR NARRATIVE TEXT

The elements are rated holistically on the following scale:

0 = no evidence

1 = meager evidence

2 = fair evidence

3 = strong evidence

Establishment of Theme - Rating is based on the completeness of the theme statement.

Coherence - Rating is based on whether the retelling is logical and makes sense (related to the text) and on how well information in the retelling is tied together.

Major Plot Episodes - Rating is based on the number of major plot episodes mentioned or referred to in the retelling.

Major Plot Elaborations - Rating is based on the amount of detail provided in the retelling related to the major plot episodes.

Awareness of Story Structure - Rating is based on how well the retelling replicates the structure of the text (including the following elements: characters, setting, basic plot, resolution).

Use of Stylistic Devices - Rating is based on how well the retelling demonstrates awareness of general storytelling conventions (including the following: dialogue, story beginning, story ending, descriptive language, repeated sentences).

Figure 1 Literary elements for narrative text.

analysis procedure used in the present study. For proficient readers, the text-based analysis of retellings in the Gambrell et al. study revealed differences across the practice sessions in positive elaborations and the story structure elements of theme and plot episodes. While the more holistic assessment procedure used in this study did not reveal these differences in theme or plot episodes, it did identify differences in major plot elaborations and revealed improvement in the use of stylistic devices, a feature that had not been previously assessed.

For less proficient readers, the text-based analysis of retellings in the Gambrell et al. revealed improvement in the story structure elements of theme and plot episodes. The more holistic assessment used in this study did not reveal any differences for the less proficient readers.

Table 1 *Means and Standard Deviations for Literary Elements for Proficient Readers (n = 24)*

	Session 1		Session 4	
	M	SD	M	SD
Theme	2.58	.88	2.41	1.01
Coherence	1.75	.74	1.96	.62
Major plot episodes	1.58	.72	1.88	.61
Major plot elaborations	1.33	.76	1.71	.46*
Story structure	1.95	.86	2.21	.78
Stylistic devices	1.91	1.10	2.67	.48*
TOTAL SCORE	11.13	3.79	12.83	2.75*

* $p < .05$.

Table 2 *Means and Standard Deviations for Literary Elements for Less Proficient Readers (n = 24)*

	Session 1		Session 4	
	M	SD	M	SD
Theme	1.88	1.08	2.12	.99
Coherence	1.71	.91	1.79	.72
Major plot episodes	1.58	.93	1.75	.79
Major plot elaborations	1.33	1.01	1.54	.78
Story structure	1.75	1.07	2.12	.74
Stylistic devices	2.13	.99	2.50	.93
TOTAL SCORE	10.38	4.99	11.83	3.99

* $p < .05$.

The comparison of the text-based and more holistic procedures suggests that the more finely-grained text-based procedure may be more sensitive to growth in retelling proficiency, particularly for less proficient readers. For the proficient readers, however, both the text-based and more holistic procedures were sensitive to student growth in retelling proficiency. The text-based analysis reflected increased scores in positive elaborations, theme and plot episodes, while the more holistic assessment was sensitive to growth in major plot elaborations and the use of stylistic devices. Since the more holistic assessment procedure did reveal improvement in proficient readers' use of stylistic devices, this feature should be considered when evaluating proficient readers' retellings.

The results of this study, which compared text-based and holistic scoring of retellings, suggest that while holistic scoring tools might appear to be more efficient, there is a cost involved that should be weighed against the possible time gained. The cost is the loss of some information on students' performance and growth. While the more holistic scoring tool might be easier to use, some of the rich

information about students' performance is lost, particularly for less-proficient readers. This can be a very real problem when teachers try to streamline scoring of rich responses to reading in cost effective ways. While a task such as retelling can be an authentic and rich indicator of students' growth in the ability to construct meaning, it is not helpful if it takes an inordinate amount of time to score or if the scoring does not fully tap the potential of the task as evidence of reading development.

The results of this study suggest that a scoring guide for evaluating retellings should combine text-based and holistic procedures. The sections of the text-based analysis that gave the most information, theme and plot episodes, could be used with the sections of the holistic guide that were most useful, plot elaborations and stylistic devices. The use of a judicious combination of indicators promises to provide a more complete, cost effective approach than either scoring approach by itself. It would allow teachers to retain the useful information from both scoring methods for the purposes of planning instruction as well as gathering assessment information.

The scoring procedures discussed in this study were used to assess growth in retelling proficiency across only four sessions of retelling practice. Future research should focus on the usefulness of these assessment procedures in detecting student growth as the result of instruction in retelling and over a more extended period of time. Indeed, growth might be much more dramatic with explicit instruction. In that case, the holistic scoring tool might prove to be a very adequate tool for teachers to use in assessment and instructional planning.

At a time when there is a call of portfolio assessment, not only in the classroom but also in large scale assessments, it is essential that scoring guides for the portfolio components be both easy to use and informative. They should make the time students spend crafting responses and the time teachers spend analyzing those responses time well spent for both teachers and students. Since retellings can provide teachers with valuable insights related to students' knowledge about text, exploration of various evaluation procedures appropriate for classroom use should be pursued in future research.

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LITERACY: ISSUES AND PRACTICES, Volume 10, 1993

The Signing for Reading Success Study Group: An Approach to Staff Development

Cynthia Bowen, Jean H. Mattheiss, and Robert M. Wilson

- "If they won't let you talk in school, you can sign." Susan, Age 7.
- "They feel it, hear it, see it, and say—it is truly multi-sensory." Pat C., teacher
- "Signing improves vocabulary skills by giving students a visual picture of the words." Mozelle S., teacher
- "It is fun and I teach my new signs to my Mom." Mark, Age 9
- "Last year's first graders always sign 'I love you' when they see me in the hall." Jean, reading specialist.

These comments are typical when teachers use signing in their classrooms. During the 1990-91 school year, reading specialists and Chapter One teachers in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) were introduced to signing as an alternative for vocabulary instruction with the hope that they would use it themselves and help teachers in their schools use it. This introduction included a two hour staff development session during which teachers were introduced to the idea of signing as a reading vocabulary activity.

Teachers were taught several signs, introduced to *The Comprehensive Signed English Dictionary* (Bornstein, Sauliner, & Hamilton, 1983), informed about the research findings on signing, and then practiced the strategy for teaching sight words with signs. The strategy was very simple: (a) Show the word to be learned. (b) Show the sign for the word. (c) Pronounce the word. (d) Repeat several times signing and pronouncing the word with the teacher. Following the introduction *The Comprehensive Signed English Dictionary* was made available to each school in the county. Follow-up sessions were held with various groups of educators to clarify the use of signing and to answer questions. This model for staff development was reported to be successful by Bowen (1988). In the spring term of 1991, the reading specialists and Chapter One teachers reported wide spread use of signing in their schools. At the same time they reported that while they desired to help teachers develop their signing strategies, they were not sure what more they could do. The decision was made to create a study group to address this problem. Study groups encourage intensive study of a single topic over a period of time, in this case a school year.

The Plan

The study group was formed by asking classroom teachers, administrators, reading specialists, Chapter One teachers, special education teachers, media specialists, and central office personnel to meet one half day a month during the 1991-92 school year. The study group adopted the name, **Signing for Reading Success Study Group (SRSSGp).** At the first meeting, a set of goals for the year was adopted and Dr. Jan Hafer, Gallaudet University, addressed the group. They decided to:

1. Develop a list of teachers and schools in which signing was currently being used.
2. Develop a high quality video tape to introduce the use of signing to teachers and other interested groups such as PTAs.
3. Develop video tapes for staff development.
4. Develop a signing bibliography to serve as a resource to teachers.
5. Identify research needs and implement research activities.
6. Develop a brochure for teachers which would identify all available signing resources in BCPS.
7. Collect a series of vignettes about signing successes from teachers who have used signing with their students.
8. Plan for future signing activities in BCPS.

After the study group met a couple of times it was decided to add another goal:

9. Provide a signing lesson for **SRSSGp** members at each meeting. This was added because the study group included educators who were currently using signing with their students and those who knew no signs.

Accomplishments

Four of these goals were selected for immediate attention, numbers 2, 4, 5 and 6. **SRSSGp** members volunteered to work in subgroups to develop plans for these four goals. At each meeting they reported on their progress and received input from the total group. By the end of the year these four goals were met:

Goal 2 Develop a signing video tape

The **SRSSGp** discussed the benefits of providing a video tape for teachers interested in using signing as a reading strategy. They also identified the content of that tape. It was decided that the tape should show teachers working with children when:

Reading big books and chart stories
Distinguishing between fact and opinion
Reciting Alphabet
Reading Key vocabulary
Signing songs

The tape was developed at the Education Channel in the BCPS. It was named, *Signing for Reading Success*. Once developed, the tape was reviewed by the

SRSSGp. When the tape was reviewed by the study group a hearing–impaired parent and Dr. Jan Hafer from Gallaudet University were invited to provide reactions and suggestions. The tape was revised based on their feedback. Copies of the tape were made for each school in the county.

Goal 4 Develop a signing bibliography

After consulting with classroom teachers, librarians, and support staff, it was decided to include research references, books, curriculum materials, and video tapes in the bibliography. Once selected, the proposed bibliography was reviewed by the entire study group and then reproduced for district-wide distribution.

Goal 5 Research needs

The first research need identified was to determine: (a) who was using signing in BCPS, (b) how they were using signing, and (c) whether they would be interested in being a part of a signing network. Obviously, this need addressed Goal 1 as well.

A survey was developed to address the first research need and it was sent to every principal (n = 93) in BCPS. Fifty-eight principals (60%) responded to the survey. They indicated that 192 teachers were using signing in their schools.

The **SRSSGp** decided to survey each of those 192 teachers to address the second and third research needs. Responses were received from 115 (59%) of those surveyed. Those 115 reported using signing as follows: alphabet instruction, 92 (80%); vocabulary instruction, 78 (68%); whole language instruction, 74 (64%); classroom management activities, 62 (54%); spelling instruction, 60 (52%); story telling, 52 (45%); music activities, 35 (30%).

In addition, over 50% of the teachers responding indicated that they were willing to demonstrate signing or talk with interested teachers. Further, 77% of those responding indicated that they would be interested in being a part of the signing network for BCPS.

Goal 6 Develop a brochure and a collection of vignettes

Goal 6 and 7 were combined. It was decided that the brochure should carry essential information about signing to teachers, parent groups, administrators, and other interested parties. It was to include four sections:

- Signing in Baltimore County Public Schools
- How to Get Started
- Available Resources
- Teachers' Comments (Vignettes)

Dr. Jan Hafer, Gallaudet University, was invited to provide feedback to the study group about the brochure contents. The brochure was developed and distributed to all schools in Baltimore County.

Goal 9 Learning new signs at each meeting

In order to continue their professional development, the members of **SRSSGp** decided to incorporate a signing lesson into each of their meetings. Pamela Henry,

a special educator of the Deaf, led the group in this activity. This became a rewarding event at each meeting.

Goal 3 Develop a video tape for staff development

During the summer of 1992, several members of the **SRSSGp** met to plan and write a script for a second video tape. This tape was designed to provide the signs needed by teachers for initial instruction in signing. It was decided to include signs for:

- Reading the story *Brown Bear*
- The alphabet
- Color names
- Animal names
- Days of the week and months of the year
- Classroom management

The filming of this video tape was planned for the fall term, 1992.

During the last **SRSSGp** meeting, it was decided to continue the study group for another year and to open the membership to any BCPS educators who might be interested in joining. The study group planned to investigate the possibility of hosting a state or regional conference on Signing for Reading Success.

Benefits of the Study Group Approach to Staff Development

Members of the study group became highly committed to the activities of the study group because they had developed ownership of the ideas. It was believed that ownership was essential if the teachers involved were expected to continue to use signing activities.

The use of signing spread rapidly throughout the BCPS. In a survey conducted in the spring term of 1992, over 200 teachers indicated that they were using signing in their classrooms.

Study group members presented their ideas at the 1992 SoMIRAC Conference and to educators in other LEAS in Maryland.

Plans for future staff development were made by the **SRSSGp.** The members agreed to continue to meet during the 1992-93 school year. They planned an after-school meeting for all of the over 200 teachers who reported using signing. This meeting was held in October, 1992, with about 150 teachers attending. A second video tape was planned for teachers who knew no signs. This tape was produced in the fall term of 1992. Consideration was given to the idea of holding a state-wide conference on signing sometime during 1993. A plan was suggested for the continued collection of data about the use of signing by teachers in BCPS.

It may be of interest to the reader that the study group activities were completed without a special budget. While the resources of the BCPS were used, no requests were made for additional monies.

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For copies of the video tape, the bibliography, or the brochure contact:

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